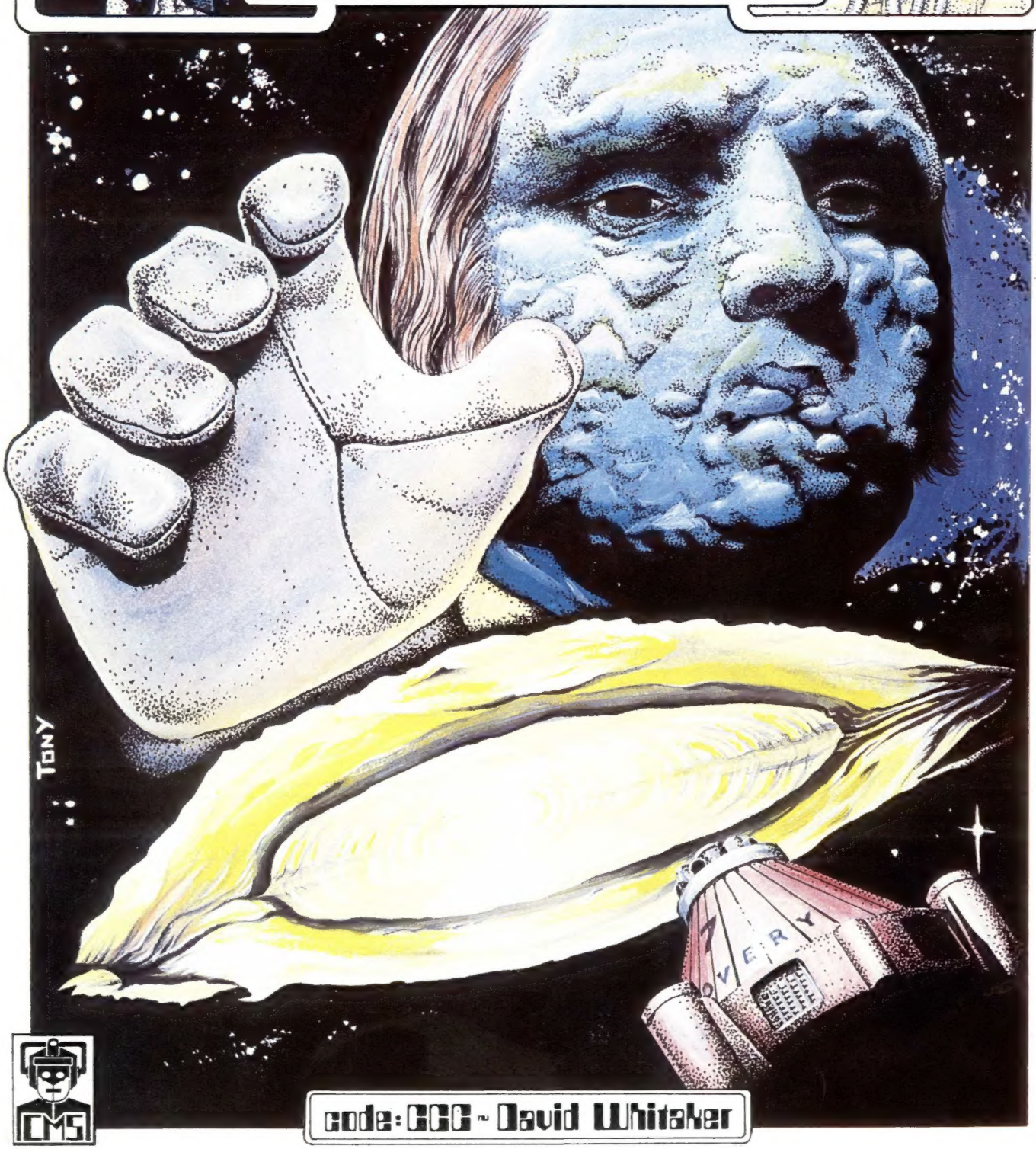
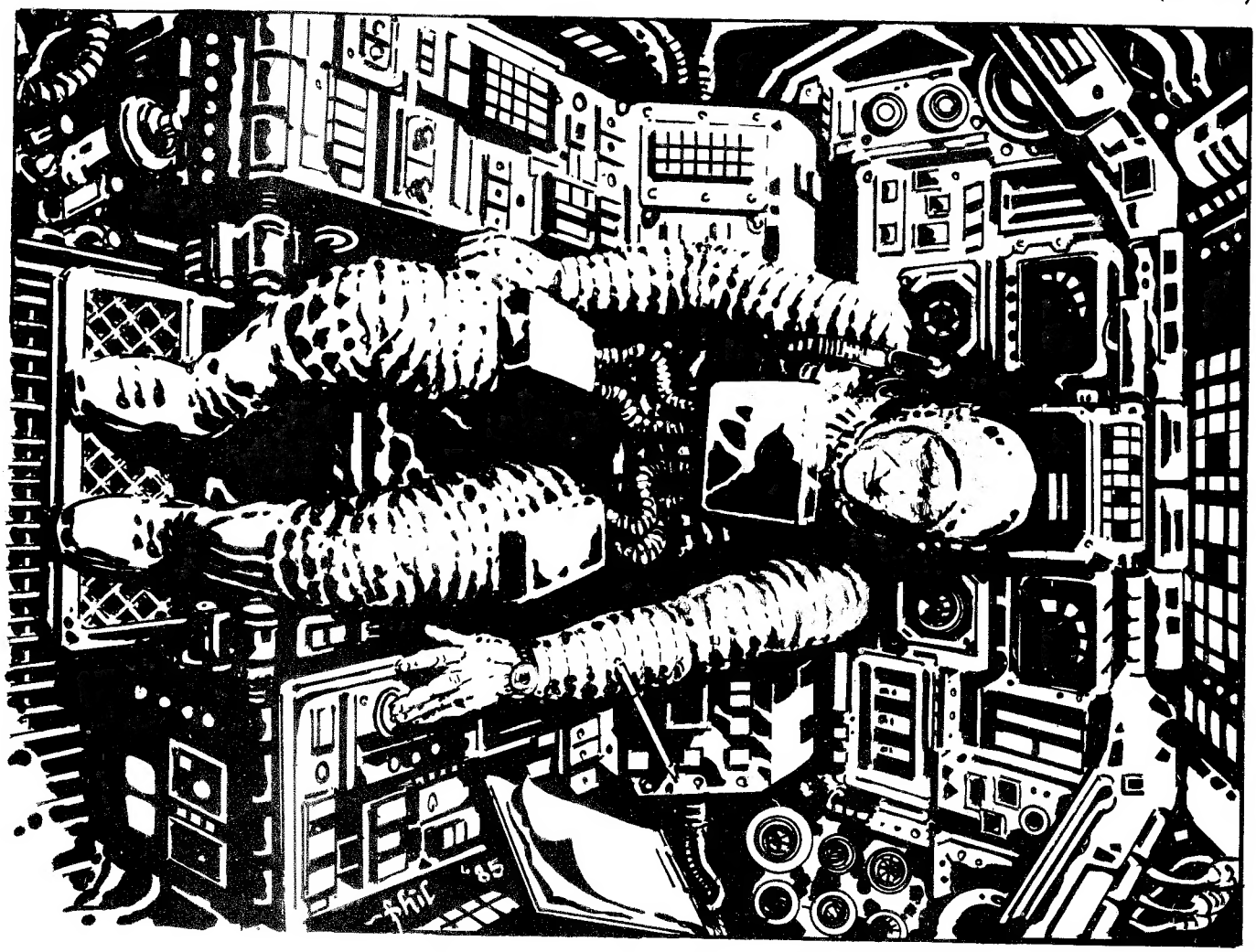
# THE AMBASSADORS OF DEATH

# DOCTOR WHO

## AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE & TIME




code: CCC ~ David Whitaker



When the Mars Probe Seven space vessel fails to return to Earth its recovery ship (Recovery Seven) is despatched to investigate. But when it, too, breaks contact with Earth the Doctor and Liz decide to look into the matter and join the Brigadier and UNIT at the British Space Command complex.

While the Command's director, Ralph Cornish, tries to re-establish contact with his three missing astronauts, the Doctor attempts to decode a series of signals emanating from the stricken vessel. He is intrigued when further signals occur - a reply to the first - originating from somewhere nearby on Earth. UNIT are quickly on the scent and trace the mysterious reply to a warehouse seven miles away. There they are confronted by a group of armed men - in reality soldiers - and do battle; but the transmitter is destroyed by the soldiers' leader, Carrington, who quickly makes his escape.

Director Cornish is excited when Recovery Seven at last returns to Earth, and a reception party sets off to greet the astronauts. The Doctor averts an attempt (by the same soldiers who had fought UNIT) to steal the recovery ship, but his victory is short-lived as the capsule is found to be empty. The astronauts have been kidnapped.

It soon becomes clear, however, that the passengers aboard Recovery Seven were not the astronauts at all, but a trio of radiation-dependent ambassadors from another planet, sent to Earth in exchange for the human astronauts on a mission of peace. Ex-astronaut on the Mars Probe Six expedition, General Carrington is the mastermind behind the kidnapping, his intention being to ruin the peace mission and promote war between Earth and the aliens. Aided and abetted by a scientist, Professor Taltalian, and a corrupt Government Minister, Sir James Quinlan, Carrington conceals the radioactive aliens at a secret hide-out in the charge of his ambitious deputy Reegan, while he formulates the next part of his plan of vengeance. He tries to convince the Doctor and the Brigadier that the kidnappers are foreign agents, and that they will use the aliens to deadly effect to disrupt the country; but the Doctor takes a dislike to the General and rejects his theory.

Liz is tricked into helping the kidnappers and is taken to the hide-out to assist a scientist named Lennox, who is charged with the task of maintaining the aliens' supply of deadly radiation. Aware of the 'astronauts'' real identity, Liz is forced to do as the kidnappers ask or risk being confined in the same room as the creatures to soak up the high level of radioactivity they emit. Unhappy with the condition of the spacesuited figures, whom he still believes are the astronauts, Lennox helps Liz to escape in order to reveal their whereabouts. But Carrington and his men are determined to succeed with their plan at any cost. Both Quinlan and Taltalian are eliminated when they threaten the General's scheme, Liz is recaptured and returned to the hide-out and Lennox is murdered when he attempts to reveal the truth to the Brigadier.

The Doctor, meanwhile, undertakes the hazardous solo journey, aboard Recovery Seven, to the Mars Probe Seven vessel still hanging in space. To his amazement he is intercepted by a gigantic alien space ship and taken on board it. There he finds the three human astronauts, all safe and well and convinced that they are being held in quarantine on Earth. His attempts to explain the truth to them thwarted, the Doctor is warned by the voice of the alien captain that the Earth will be destroyed unless the ambassadors are returned soon. The Time Lord is allowed to travel back to Earth to inform the proper authorities and to arrange for the safe return of the abducted aliens.

When he arrives on Earth, however, the Doctor is himself kidnapped by Reegan, still holding both Liz and the aliens captive. General Carrington now reveals himself as responsible for the mad scheme to cause a war between planets, and that his acute xenophobia results from the accidental killing of one of his crew by the aliens during the Mars Probe Six expedition. Now he plans to discredit the aliens publicly, and encourage an all-out attack upon their space vessel.

The Brigadier leads an assault upon Carrington's hide-out and rescues the Doctor and two of the aliens. The third has already been taken to Space Command by Carrington, from where his warmongering, world-wide television exposé will be broadcast. Using the two other aliens to force their way into Space Command, the Doctor and UNIT are able to halt the broadcast, and Carrington and his men are arrested. The Doctor then plans for the peaceful exchange of the aliens and the astronauts, still waiting patiently to return home.

JBP
(on 3, shot 91) - 3 -

REEGAN: (cont) He's the only one who can make a machine that'll let us talk to these creatures.

92. 2 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: You've got a machine to do that.

93. 4 A — Close 2/S CARRINGTON/ REEGAN

(REEGAN PICKS UP THE WALKIE-TALKIE MACHINE)

REEGAN: This thing only sends limited one-way signals.

CARRINGTON: Well?

94. 3 A — CU REEGAN

REEGAN: If I'm going to carry out your orders, sir, I'll have to give them some pretty complicated instructions. / (PAUSE) Still, suit yourself. You want to kill him - kill him!

95. 4 A — A/B. PAN REEGAN R.

96. 2 A — CU CARRINGTON (CARRINGTON LOWERS HIS REVOLVER SLIGHTLY, TURNS TO DOCTOR WHO)

97. 1 A — CU GUN

98. 5 A — 3/S CARRINGTON/ DOCTOR/LIZ. CARRINGTON X's R.

CARRINGTON: Could you make a better machine?

DOCTOR WHO: Given the necessary equipment.

CARRINGTON: And you're willing to help us?

99. 1 A — CU DOCTOR

DOCTOR WHO: It depends what you're trying to do.

100. 4 A — 3/S DOCTOR/ LIZ/ CARRINGTON

LIZ: (PROTEST) Doctor!

DOCTOR WHO: Liz. Well, General?

CARRINGTON: We've got to alert the world to the menace of alien invasion.

(5 next) - 3 -

JBP
(on 4, shot 101) - 4 -

(REEGAN REACTS TO THIS NEW INFORMATION, BUT SAYS NOTHING)

DOCTOR WHO: When do you expect this invasion?

CARRINGTON: At any moment.

DOCTOR WHO: They told me their intentions were peaceful - and that these (INDICATING ASTRONAUTS) are their ambassadors.

101. 5 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: Ambassadors, that was just to put us off our guard.

102. 1 A — CU DOCTOR

DOCTOR WHO: You're convinced that they're hostile?

103. 4 A — A/B CARRINGTON & DR. go u/s

CARRINGTON: Why else should they spread through the galaxy? They were on Mars before us.

DOCTOR WHO: That's where you met them, when you were on the earlier Mars probe?

104. 3 A — CU CARRINGTON

(FOR A MOMENT CARRINGTON DOES NOT REPLY. WHAT HE IS REMEMBERING IS SO PAINFUL TO HIM)

CARRINGTON: They killed my fellow astronaut, simply by touching him.

105. 2 A — CU DOCTOR

DOCTOR WHO: They didn't know that their touch is lethal to Man.

106. 3 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: They've walked into my trap. Once I had them here, I knew I could force them to reveal their true natures.

107. 4 A — A/B. CARRINGTON comes fwd.

(5 next) - 4 -

JBP
(on 4, shot 107) - 5 -

DOCTOR WHO: You arranged for them to send these three ambassadors.

Keep DR. C. of F.

LIZ: So you hired Reegan to kidnap them and use them as killers?

CARRINGTON: It was the only way to arouse public opinion.

DOCTOR WHO: Was Sir James Quinlan in on this?

108. 2 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: He wanted the political glory of arranging the first contact between Mankind and an intelligent alien species. / He knew nothing of my plan to save the world. He wouldn't have understood.

109. 4 A — CU DOCTOR

110. 5 A — CU CARRINGTON

111. 1 A — CU LIZ

LIZ: What about Van Lydan and the astronauts - the human ones?

112. 5 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: They knew nothing. It was the only way.

113. 4 A — Deep 2/S. DOCTOR/CARR. DOCTOR comes fwd.

DOCTOR WHO: You've worked things out very thoroughly, General.

114. 1 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: It was the only way. You do understand, don't you, Doctor?

115. 5 A — CU DOCTOR

DOCTOR WHO: Yes, General, / I understand. You had to do what you did.

116. 1 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: Exactly! The world must be protected. It's our moral duty. / (PAUSE) Will you help?

117. 5 A — CU DOCTOR

118. 1 A — CU CARRINGTON

DOCTOR WHO: I'll build your machine for you.

119. 5 A — CU DOCTOR

120. 1 A — CU CARRINGTON - 5 -

(4 next)

JBP
(on 1, shot 120) - 6 -

(CARRINGTON HOLSTERS HIS REVOLVER)

121. 4 A — 3/S LIZ/ CARRINGTON/ DOCTOR

CARRINGTON: Splendid. / (TO REEGAN) I think this man can be useful to us. Get him everything he needs.

REEGAN: Okay.

PAN CARRINGTON R. to 2/S with REEGAN

CARRINGTON: (CONTINUING) I'm taking one of these creatures away with me.

122. 2 A — CU CARRINGTON

CARRINGTON: (CUTTING IN) Kindly brought a shielded van, / Instruct one of them to come out.

123. 4 A — A/B

REEGAN: (TO LIZ) Open the door.

124. 1 A — MS LIZ. PAN her R. to W/S. PAN ASTRONAUT L. - CENTRE on DR.

(LIZ UNLOCKS AND UNBOLTS THE DOOR TO THE CUBICLE.

REEGAN OPERATES THE WALKIE-TALKIE MACHINE.

ONE OF THE ALIEN ASTRONAUTS COMES OUT, PAUSES, THEN MOVES OFF TOWARDS THE MAIN DOOR.

CARRINGTON PRODUCES A SHEAF OF PAPERS)

125. 2 A — X2/S CARR./ REEGAN(f/g) Let CARRINGTON go

CARRINGTON: (TO REEGAN) I've got some instructions for you. You're going to raid a number of isotope stores.

REEGAN: Am I?

CARRINGTON: (INDICATING PAPERS) Everything you need there. Please. Maps. Just follow your orders.

(3 next) - 6 -

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# STORY REVIEW

## Geraint Jones

March 21st 1970. Eleven weeks had by now gone by since the third Doctor found himself exiled on Earth. And after two adventures, I honestly began to wonder whether the production team could keep coming up with fresh ideas while working under such Earth-bound constraints. The answer came on this Saturday, which marked the beginning of a story with the intriguing title of 'The Ambassadors of Death'. Seven weeks later, as the last episode faded from the screen, I began to wonder if 'Done to Death' might not have been a more appropriate title.

The idea itself was original enough, and for the most part very well executed. But even the best of ideas can be stretched only to a certain point; this script was drawn out far beyond that point, and somewhere in the middle simply snapped. Doubtless this was due in part to its rather chequered history, with David Whitaker having re-written it a number of times before finally Malcolm Hulke was brought in to finish off the job (see page "53-08"). Unfortunately, this was all too apparent.

What the story tried to be was a thriller, and in many respects it succeeded admirably. Many of the action scenes would not have seemed out of place in a good Hitchcock film. The ending of the third episode for example - where, after an extensive chase sequence, Liz is thrown over the edge of a bridge - stands as one of the series' best ever cliff-hangers. Also very memorable was the scene (again in episode three) where Reegan, the archetypal 'thug', callously dumps two bodies in a gravel pit, hoping they will remain there, forever buried.

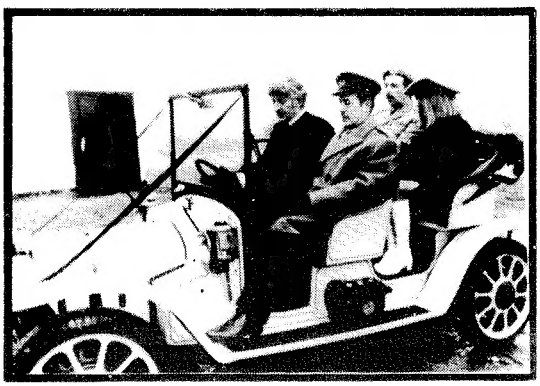
Further adding to the thriller element was a good dose of atmosphere. Nothing seems to illustrate this better than the eerie sight of the three silent, alien astronauts in Carrington's hideaway, and again in the scenes where they are being used as instruments of terror. Although their actual faces were seen only very briefly, and their voices not even heard until episode seven, their very presence made them memorable 'Doctor Who' aliens.

But fast action, murder and atmosphere are not the only things needed for a good thriller. One also needs plenty of suspense, and a good mystery; and these were sadly missing. It became rather obvious from episode two onwards that the 'astronauts' were in fact aliens, so why wait until episode six to reveal this 'twist'? It was also pointless trying to make General Carrington a mystery character since he was clearly seen to be implicated in the villainy from the word 'go'. Even Taltalian was revealed as a traitor at the end of the first episode. Defining everything too clearly at too early a stage was a mistake which all of the re-writing had clearly failed to correct.

Despite drastic weaknesses in the script and plot, however, the directorial skills of Michael Ferguson miraculously managed to make at least the visual content of the adventure very watchable. There were few scenes which made me want to cringe; the whole 'feel' of the show was extremely professional and glossy, with high production values throughout. But then again, that was the least we could have expected after it had been decided to stretch the budget over so few stories in this particular season.

Ferguson excelled himself particularly in the action scenes. A lot of the credit for these realistic chases and fights must also go, of course, to the newly-formed stunt team HAVOC (see page "53-11"). One example worthy of mention came in episode two when the enemy helicopter attacked the UNIT convoy. I was convinced that such low flying was going to lead to a disasterous explosive crash!

The model and special effects work were also very convincing. However, I could hardly help but laugh at the 'docking' scene in the first episode when the recovery rocket links up with the stranded Mars Probe 7. To linger on this scene, with a 'romantic' piece of incidental music in the background, was so obviously a rip off of the famous space ship scenes in the recently-released '2001: A Space Odyssey' epic. Why not go the whole hog and use 'The Blue Danube'? Stanley Kubrick must have split his sides with mirth if he happened to be watching. But credit where credit is due; for most of the story, the incidental music was some of the finest heard in the programme so far. Much of what was composed consisted of background 'mood' sounds, which could hardly be called music in the conventional sense; it was however very effective, especially when used to emphasise the alien quality of the Ambassadors. More memorable still were the more melodic 'themes', particularly those associated with Liz Shaw and Bessie. I still find myself whistling them from time to time!



Another element which helped to maintain interest in the strained storyline was that of the characters. By far the most interesting of these was General Carrington. For once we were presented with a principal 'villain' who was not a megalomaniac trying to take over the world, but simply a misguided figure. He was truly convinced that the intentions of the aliens were hostile. Everything he did was motivated by his fanatical desire to act out his 'moral duty'. Even when faced with the truth in the final episode, he had no remorse.

The less-desirable elements of Mankind were manifested in Taltalian and Reegan. It was never really made clear what Taltalian's motives were, but he was quite prepared to murder the Doctor when asked to. Reegan's motives, on the other hand, were as clear as gin; the twin goals of power and money. The character I had most sympathy for was Lennox; a scientist, not really wanted by anyone, who was being used left, right and centre. One could hardly but feel sorry for him as he was locked in a cell for his own so-called 'protection'. His last resting place.

Jon Pertwee was given his greatest opportunity yet to demonstrate his love of action and gadgets throughout the seven episodes of this story. It was also nice to see him given the chance to add several touches of comic relief. All of these elements came to the fore in the scene in episode two when the Doctor stops Bessie in the middle of the road in front of the juggernaut hijacked by Carrington and Grey, acting as a rather dotty stranded traveller. Suddenly, as the two men try to help him shift Bessie, he flicks an anti-theft device (!) which sticks them to the car, then jumps into the juggernaut and drives off - with the space capsule as cargo! Another scene I found curiously amusing in this episode was when, after treating Collinson very kindly in his cell, the Doctor suddenly barks out an order for the man to stand up when talking to him, and to call him 'Sir'. And from Collinson's immediate reaction, the Doctor deduces that he is a regular army sergeant. Amazing!

Of course the Time Lord was as intolerant as ever of figures of authority. When he first came face-to-face with Ralph Cornish (who remained rather wooden throughout), the dialogue fairly sparkled:

Cornish: I've got no time to talk to the press.
Doctor: Quite right: neither have I. Now that sound - have you got a recording of it?
Cornish: Brigadier, who is this?
Brigadier: He's one of my associates.
Cornish: Then will you kindly get 'one of your associates' out of here?
Doctor: Now you listen to me. That sound was some kind of message - and it's going to be repeated...
Cornish: Will you please get this man out of here?
Doctor: We've got to break down that code and answer them.
Cornish: Answer who?
Doctor: The man's a fool. How can I possibly tell who the message is from until I know what it says? Let me explain this to you in simple terms...

One thing that constantly annoyed me in this story was the ease and speed with which the recovery rockets were sent up into deep space and brought back again. Fair enough, this was doubtless necessary so as not to slow still further the pace of an already laboured plot, but - even given that the action was presumably supposed to be taking place a few years in the future - I did feel some explanation and justification could have been given. After all, space travel was very much in the news at this time, and the checks that the Apollo missions had to go through were well known to be meticulous. Either the British Space Agency had something Cape Canaveral didn't, or the 'M3 Varient' added to the fuel was the best thing to happen to astronauts since the invention of synthetic food!

Overall then, not a very satisfying story, and a great disappointment after the seventh season had got off to such a great start, with two really cracking adventures. 'The Ambassadors of Death' would perhaps have made a nice four-parter, but in seven segments it simply fell under its own weight. I prayed that the next story would not last for so long...

SPACE & TIME

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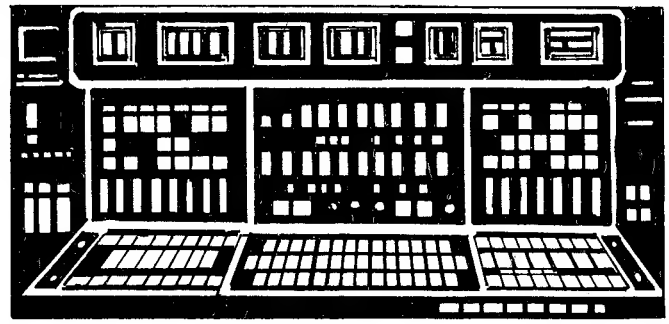


# BRAVE NEW WORLD

## Trevor Wayne

It was never explicitly stated exactly when in the near future the stories of the new series of 'Doctor Who' were supposed to be set, but as the Brigadier was not visibly older than in 'The Invasion' (Serial "VV") set in 1979, the early 1980s would be a good guess. Near enough to the viewers' present to give the stories a feel of immediacy and yet far enough ahead to allow a degree of latitude in respect of scientific and political developments. A not too dissimilar view of the early 1980s was presented in Gerry Anderson's 'UFO'. There, in place of UNIT the World is protected from a menace from space by the Supreme Headquarters Alien Defence Organisation, SHADO.

In 'Doctor Who' UNIT has sections, apparently, in many if not all member states of the United Nations Organisation; we see only the operations of the British section to which the Doctor has become unofficially attached. Although UNIT is nominally commanded by its own Headquarters in Geneva, the individual sections are very much under the command of their respective governments which seem to have control over finances and manpower. The British section is, perhaps not unexpectedly, small, but does have recourse to support from the Regular Army (and presumably the other services) via liaison officers who outrank the Brigadier who commands the UNIT section. Commander Straker of 'UFO's SHADO answers only to the United Nations, which controls his finances. He has his own staff and bases on Earth and the Moon, and a dazzling array of submarines, spacecraft, planes and tanks at his disposal. The Brigadier may have easy access to both the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister to smooth the passage of any major requests he may have, but Straker has hotlines to both Washington and Moscow.

The Britain in which the Doctor finds himself exiled is, despite a seemingly constant succession of dire threats, an optimistic view of 'tomorrow' where things are going well both economically and technologically. So well, in fact, that little over a decade after the Americans put the first man on the Moon, Britain is quite independently involved in the exploration of Mars. (As a point of interest, it is curious to note that the Ice Warrior culture of the Red Planet is totally overlooked in 'The Ambassadors of Death'.) 'UFO', for all its technological optimism, has all major space launches still provided by NASA.

Project Apollo, which had most of the world 'moonstruck' following the two successful lunar landings of Apollos 11 and 12 in the latter half of 1969, provided another thrill at this time. Just over half way through 'The Ambassadors of Death', as the Doctor and his friends try to unravel a web of intrigue to solve the mystery of the astronauts who have disappeared after returning to Earth an explosion aboard the Command Service Module of Apollo 13 on its way to the Moon caused the mission to be aborted and the world to hold its collective breath as the astronauts achieved the near-miraculous feat of bringing their crippled craft back and making a safe re-entry. Once again the reality of pioneer space exploration proved far more gripping than any fictional space tale could hope to be.

If the present was providing more thrills than an imagined future, in hindsight we are perhaps little surprised; pundits who in 1970 predicted a bright, technologically-provided future all ignored the gathering clouds of inflation and recession. In reality, it is unlikely that we would be able to finance even the relatively modest operation of UNIT in the early 1980s, let alone the vast programme required by SHADO. However, it is of course impossible to draw on knowledge of the future in order to make predictions, and so the past must provide the model on which any view of tomorrow is based. The event which totally overshadows the latter half of the Twentieth Century is the Second World War, during which civilians as well as soldiers and other members of the armed forces were the victims of attacks. In the science fiction tales we are considering, the man in the street is just as likely to be the victim of the Autons, the Silurians' disease or the deadly touch of the Ambassadors as are the Brigadier's men. We are still with the 1950s post-War 'total mobilisation' pictures, with their scenes and images of large numbers of soldiers on the streets protecting the populace from enemies without or within. The echo of atomic mushroom clouds over Japan still hangs over us, and the spectre of the folly and greed that blight human nature is still at our shoulder.

# PRODUCTION OFFICE

## Jeremy Bentham

"I think if 'The Ambassadors of Death' taught me one thing it was the importance of keeping a close eye on the budget" maintains Barry Letts, for whom this story was a baptism of fire as the series' Producer.

"Directors are a very enthusiastic breed who, quite naturally, always want the very best for their story. The problem lies insofar as what they push for invariably comes down to a question of more money. This is where the Producer comes in, as arbiter of the whole season, to decide how money is to be apportioned throughout all the serials.

"The main example I can quote from 'The Ambassadors of Death' is the scene where the villains attempt to hi-jack the three astronauts on their return to Earth. I can't remember the script exactly, but I think, to begin with, all this scene originally involved was one Landrover and a few heavies with guns.

"Michael Ferguson was, and is, a very good Director with a terrific eye for film. And all during my first month or so as Producer he was continually seeking me out with ideas he'd had for making this scene more visually exciting. Of course, being fairly green, and with a lot of my own Director instincts still prevailing, I was saying 'Yes, yes, yes' to all of this until, by the end of the day, we'd got something like a five minute sequence involving helicopters, motor bikes, smoke bombs, explosions - the whole works.

"On film it looked tremendous, but, my God, you should have seen the day the bill arrived!

"As a Production Office you don't actually write out any cheques yourself. Nevertheless every programme has to work within the budget it's given, with heavy penalties imposed if the limit is ever exceeded. One of the unspoken rules Auntie imposes is that any Director who blows his budget on a show never, ever works on that show again.

"So with 'The Ambassadors of Death', the biggest problem I had to face was looking around for cuts we could make in the show to pay for this enormously expensive bit of filming. And it wasn't easy, I can tell you."

Problems were virtually a hand-in-glove companion of this story, which had been fraught with them ever since its inception some two years earlier.

Pleased with the 'James Bond thriller' style of 'The Emeny of the World' (Serial "PP"), Derrick Sherwin, then Script Editor, commissioned David Whitaker to write another fast-paced contemporary drama involving the events surrounding Man's first contact with an intelligent alien life form. The notion was that the aliens' presence on Earth would, somehow, prove lethal to human beings, leading to a mistaken belief - compounded by communication difficulties between the two species - that the aliens were hostile.

As Sherwin took over more and more of the Producer's responsibilities towards the end of the sixth season, the task of handling this script fell to Terrance Dicks. Dicks well remembers the great headaches involved in getting it into a workable form:

"It was one of those cases where a script just goes wrong, through no inherent fault of the writer. As with nearly all first drafts, there were elements in the script which you felt just didn't work. To give you an example; you might get a script which features a character played very hard. Now, on reading the whole script you might decide, as the Story Editor, it would be better if the character was played softer. So you call the writer in, discuss it, and he goes away and produces the next draft.

"With 'The Ambassadors of Death' David (Whitaker) did, I think, about seventeen re-writes in all, and it still wasn't working even then. Every time a new draft was done to change one thing, it would end up throwing something else out.

"When that happens you eventually arrive at the point where the writer has got so wrapped up in the story he can't give you anything new.

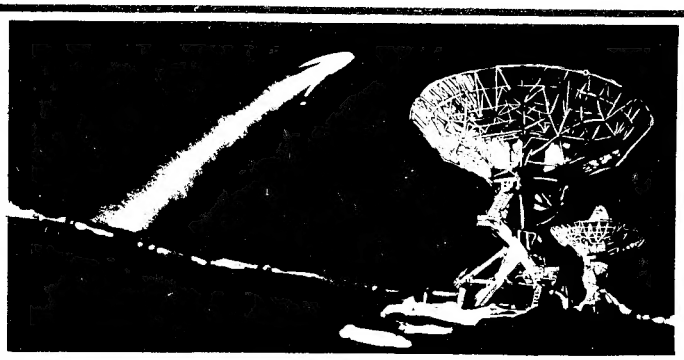
"It was about this time that David announced he was moving to Australia to do some work there. So what I did was arrange to have David paid off in full, which I insisted on for all the work he'd done on the scripts, and then handed the drafts to Mac Hulke to re-write with a fresh eye."

Commissioned in 1968 as a six-parter, the serial had gone through a great many name changes, beginning life as 'The Invaders from Mars', then transmuting through 'The Carriers of Death' to 'The Ambassadors', before finally arriving as a seven-parter (for budgetary reasons) with the amalgam name of 'The Ambassadors of Death'

Hulke's modifications to the storyline are unlikely ever to be fully detailed, but it is known that in Whitaker's original drafts the main villain was Reegan, a gang-land boss who saw the aliens as a means to increasing his own considerable power and fortune. Hulke modified Whitaker's character of General Cunningham into the morally duty-bound General Carrington to give the story what he felt was a more interesting basis than the simple motive of pure greed.

'The Ambassadors of Death' proved to be the last script for 'Doctor Who' by David Whitaker, the man who had all but created the series' myth and mythology during the Sixties. Due to the aforementioned problems, it was also the one with which he was least happy. When interviewed several years later, he explained that the root cause of the difficulties lay in the fact that he had written the story at a time when the series was entering a period of transition, with its future hanging in the balance. In his first drafts he had, naturally enough, made Jamie, Zoe and the second Doctor the principal characters. With each successive re-write he had been called upon to perform, however, this specification had been changed; clearly the production team had been uncertain which, if any, of the three lead actors would be staying on for the new season, what the format of that season would be and indeed whether there would even be a new season. Not surprisingly, this had presented Whitaker with some major headaches, such as the need to incorporate the Brigadier and UNIT into his plot.

The dissatisfaction Whitaker felt with this story was not, however, the reason for his break with 'Doctor Who'. Rather, this was due to the fact that by mid-1971 he had emigrated to Australia to take up a post writing for ABC Television. There he penned a six part serialisation of Nevile Shute's 'The Far Country' and devised a successfull series called 'The Drifter'. At the invitation of the University of New South Wales he set up, and ran for two years, a Play Writers' Studio which fulfilled a long-term ambition to teach youngsters the art of writing for television.



# TIMES OF CHANGE

## Jeremy Bentham

Listeners to radio's exceptionally popular comedy show 'I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again' cannot fail to have found much with which to sympathise in one of David Hatch's more topical preludes to a sketch during 1970:

"Viewers with exceptional eyesight and powerful microscopes may have noticed in the new-look 'Radio Times'..."

Yes, Auntie was seeking to change her image in tune with the new decade, and, promising to bring richness and colour into the lives of the monochromed masses, one of the first trinkets out of her bag was a revamped version of that paragon of broadcasting etiquette, the 'Radio Times'.

Having held out with almost total intransigence against the artistically explosive Sixties, the BBC's organ of public dissertation was at last bowing to the present tense, undergoing a facelift, designed to make it appeal to the younger viewers whom research had shown now made up the bulk of the audience at peak viewing times.

It wasn't entirely a hit with the misses and misters of Great Britain. The size of type in some of the earlier issues was enough to despatch whole generations of newly squint-eyed individuals in search of the nearest eye doctor. But there were compensations. Smaller type meant more space for articles, an intolerable vacuum that prompted reporter Deirdre MacDonald to go off in search of her own Doctor wherewithal to fill several pages with the most in-depth look yet at the BBC's favourite Time Lord.

Conducted around the day of episode five's recording on 'The Ambassadors of Death', MacDonald began her comprehensive over-view with a visit to the Special Effects Department.

A hive of activity, this Department was still being run by Jack Kine who, with Bernard Wilkie, had created it back in the mid-Fifties. Recently, thanks to the demands of such programmes as 'Doomwatch', 'The Goodies' and 'Monty Python's Flying Circus', the role of visual effects had expanded considerably. From a small workshop in Alexandra Palace the Effects unit now sprawled over a large part of the scenery block to the rear of the Television Centre.

By such expansion Kine was seeking to eliminate the need for programmes to go to outside companies for their effects, as 'Doctor Who' had done during Peter Bryant's tenure as Producer. With more and more young trainees being taken on in Summer Attachment postings the staff of the unit was rapidly edging towards the forty mark. On the day of Deirdre MacDonald's visit the workshop was littered with props from recent 'Doctor Who's - the Silurian dinosaur, a set of Cyberman helmets and, the most recent addition, Peter Day's corrugated cardboard space rocket for 'The Ambassadors of Death', complete with vents inset to belch dry ice steam from pipes on cue.

"Anything that can be imagined can be made" quoted Kine, pointing out the tools of his Designers' trade - everything from electronic circuit boards to pots of glue. Latex rubber enabled James Ward to create the visually ef-

fective Silurian masks, while Ian Scoones prefered plastic card and fibre-glass to construct his miniatures of the Mars Probe capsule and Recovery 7.

Very often, as Deirdre MacDonald discovered, 'Doctor Who' depended on a mixing of several Departments' talents to achieve its finished illusion. Visual Effects made the fibre-glass helmets worn by the alien Ambassadors, but it was Costume Supervisor Christine Rawlins who mapped out the design of the spacesuits and Make-up Supervisor Marion Richards who built up an actor's face with layers of tissue and wet latex solution over a blue foundation for the all-important unmasking scene in episode five. Then, with the help of an overlaid CSO image, the Ambassador's face could be given its softly glowing countenance.

Not content with looking at just the behind-camera effects men, 'Radio Times'' intrepid journalist also ventured onto the fifth floor of the BBC's Union House to meet a moustachioed Terrance Dicks and a beardless Barry Letts, the production team behind the narrative strokes recently effective in boosting the series' once-sagging ratings. Against a backdrop of newspaper cuttings, publicity stills and editions of 'New Scientist', Letts displayed the clipping about a Professional Child Guidance Expert who maintained that the 'Doctor Who' series "releases a child's aggressive impulses, and is essentially moral, because right triumphs over might".

And for on-screen effectiveness, who better to interview than the current series' title holder Jon Pertwee, in the comfortable surroundings of his home in Barnes, London with his two children, Sean and Dariel.

Undaunted by the lofty accolade of appearing in 'Radio Times', Jon Pertwee defended the realistic approach Letts and Dicks were advocating for 'Doctor Who' in the Seventies with his classic quote destined for the history books. "There's nothing more frightening and alarming," he asserted, "than finding a Yeti or some such creature sitting on the loo in Tooting Bec".

The hallowed halls of Marylebone High Street would never be the same again.

# TECHNICAL OBSERVATIONS

## Jeremy Bentham

Director Michael Ferguson stretched 'Doctor Who's production values to the limit in his handling of 'The Ambassadors of Death', with the greater strength of his work revolving around the film sequences. He was fortunate enough in this respect to be allocated two of the BBC's most senior Film Cameramen, A.A. Englander and Tony Leggo, both experienced professionals whose careers with the Corporation spanned from the 1950s.

The episode one gun battle punch-up between UNIT and General Carrington's men took place in the deserted Acton factory recently acquired by the BBC (see 'Spearhead from Space', page "51-08"). In charge of choreographing stunt sequences was Derek Ware, creator and manager of HAVOC, a stuntmen's association making its debut on 'Doctor Who'.

A freelance company, HAVOC had been formed in the mid-1960s by Ware specifically to provide film and television units with teams of trained stuntmen for action scenes. Directors contacted Ware who, in turn, would either set up a team himself from stuntmen on his books, or else turn the assignment over to one of his fellow senior stuntmen, such as Terry Walsh. The organisation made its money by accepting a 10% agent's commission from all stuntmen who worked on a HAVOC assignment.

Half a dozen stuntmen were needed for 'The Ambassadors of Death', for example to supplement the walk-ons in the aforementioned warehouse assault. Ware himself played one of the lead 'heavies' in this scene, arranging the actual fight shots and liaising with Visual Effects Designer Peter Day on the placing of acoustic charges into walls and props to simulate bullet ricochettes. As with all the UNIT stories of this period the weapons used were real rifles and pistols, supplied by a contracted armourer. Although these were loaded only with blanks, one of the biggest problems faced by Ware was persuading Nicholas Courtney to fire a gun without his eyes closed...

The big stunt set piece of this story, however, was the attack on the UNIT convoy by a helicopter assault team. Filmed in the Buckinghamshire countryside, some miles from Uxbridge, the sequence involved Michael Ferguson and Derek Ware directing the BBC's helicopter, two motor cycle outriders, a low loader and a whole team of stuntmen equipped with smoke grenades and imitation gas projectors. The five minute sequence took two days to shoot and was climaxed with a spectacular stunt fall by Roy Scammell.

Most of the remaining exteriors were shot in and around the gas works at Southall. One small risk the production team took was allowing Caroline John to solo drive 'Bessie' in possession of only a provisional driving licence.

Reegan's van with its switchable number plates and sign boards featured a small in-joke. The first sign board, that of "Heyhoe Launderers", was named after the A.F.M. on this story, Margot Heyhoe. The second, "Silcock Bakeries", referred to Production Assistant Pauline Silcock.

While Peter Day oversaw all the mechanical effects in this story the detailed space capsule miniatures were designed, built and filmed by Ian Scoones, a former Effects Designer for Gerry Anderson who had learnt his trade on 'Thunderbirds' and 'Captain Scarlet'. Since joining the BBC in the late 1960s Scoones had been attached to the grandly-named Space Unit which handled coverage of the Russian/American spaceshots.

Recording of this story commenced in Studio 3, Television Centre, on February 13th 1970. Stretching the BBC's technical resources to the limit, Ferguson assembled for the first episode alone a 'Videcon' camera, a video disc machine, CSO facilities and back-projection equipment.

Trained on the Recovery 7 capsule set, the 'Videcon' camera allowed Inlay Operator 'Mitch' Mitchell to move the wide-angle image slowly but electronically around the output screen without the camera needing to tilt and pan. Thus was weightlessness simulated.

Video disc enabled Ferguson to insert one of his 'trademarks' - rapid intercutting - as Van Lyden enters Mars Probe 7. All the entry scene shots and the reactions at Space Control as the alien transmission is heard were recorded conventionally onto disc. Then, by replaying the shots from disc Ferguson could a) slow down the capsule footage to give a slow motion effect and b) jump the playback head from track to track, sending rapidly intercut shots from several perspectives to the output recorder.

The original ending of episode one was to have been the first sight of the empty space capsule with Cornish's voice-over fruitlessly attempting communication. For this shot a set of mirrors was carefully positioned, allowing one of the pedestal-mounted cameras a perspective into the capsule's interior. However, as it would have meant the episode under-running, material from episode two was added to the point where Taltalian pulls a gun on the Doctor and Liz.

Visual Effects built a model of the roof dome at Space Control, so constructed that it could be aligned on a pylon mid-way between a camera and the control room set. This gave an impression of size to the room by shooting the set, using a wide screen lens, with the model acting as a border to the shot.

The unusual title sequences of this story - 20 seconds of conventional graphics/music, a short introductory scene (usually the reprise) and then another 10 seconds of titles proclaiming 'THE AMBASSADORS OF' with the word 'DEATH' zooming into bottom frame, plus the author and episode number captions - were all recorded during episode two's studio session on February 20th. Due to the large amount of film to be edited in, both episodes two and three were recorded on that date, with time left over at the end for the trailer to be shot.

This trailer intercut several sequences of action film with black background studio recorded close-ups of Jon Pertwee narrating such by-lines as "Someone is attempting to steal Recovery 7!" The finished piece, almost a minute and a half long, was transmitted after the last episode of 'Doctor Who and the Silurians' (Serial "BBB").

Episode seven, recorded on March 27th 1970, was the first episode deliberately shot out of script order. All the Space Control scenes were shot first, then the sequences in Reegan's hideout, then the UNIT H.Q. sections and finally a couple of sequences in the decontamination unit.

A six piece orchestra performed Dudley Simpson's incidental music which, like the format of the story as a whole, was 'James Bond' inspired. Consequently much of it was divided into themes. UNIT had its own up-tempo march, a jazzy theme accompanied Liz Shaw and even the spacecraft miniatures were seen alongside downbeat melodies reminiscent of '2001: A Space Oddysey'.

On April 11th, part four of this serial narrowly escaped postponement when the F.A. Cup Final went into extra time. An episode of 'Dad's Army' suffered that fate instead, pushing 'Doctor Who' back into the 5:45p.m. time slot.

# PRODUCTION CREDITS

## Stephen James Walker

SERIAL "CCC" COLOUR

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PART 1 | Duration 24' 15" | 21st. March 1970 |
| PART 2 | Duration 24' 39" | 28th. March 1970 |
| PART 3 | Duration 24' 38" | 4th. April 1970 |
| PART 4 | Duration 24' 37" | 11th. April 1970 |
| PART 5 | Duration 24' 17" | 18th. April 1970 |
| PART 6 | Duration 24' 31" | 25th. April 1970 |
| PART 7 | Duration 24' 32" | 2nd. May 1970 |

### CAST

STARRING:

Doctor Who.....Jon Partwee
Liz Shaw.....Caroline John
Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart.....Nicholas Courtney

FEATURING:

Professor Bruno Taltalian.....Robert Cawdron
Ralph Cornish.....Ronald Allen
General Carrington.....John Abineri
Sir James Quinlan.....Dallas Cavell
Reegan.....William Dysart
Sergeant Benton.....John Levene
Lennox.....Cyril Shaps

WITH:

John Wakefield.....Michael Wisher
Grey.....Ray Armstrong
Miss Rutherford.....Cheryl Molineaux
Collinson.....Robert Robertson
Professor Heldorf.....Gordon Sterne
Corporal Champion.....James Haswell
Private Parker.....James Clayton
Private Johnson.....Geoffrey Beevers
Dobson.....Juan Moreno
Peterson.....Roy Scammell
Flynn.....Tony Harwood
Charles Van Lyden.....Ric Felgate
Frank Michaels.....Neville Simons
Joe Lefee.....Steve Peters
Alien A.....Ric Felgate
Alien B.....Neville Simons
Alien C.....Steve Peters
Alien Captain.....Peter Noel Cook
Alien Voice.....Peter Halliday
Masters.....John Lord
Control Room Assistants.....Clive Rogers, Rod Peers
Roy Brent, Caroline Mylon, Lindsey Scott
Wilma Oswald, Keith Simon, Roger Minnis
Sally Avory, Stella Conway, Barbara Faye
Dennis Haywood, Paul Gilman, Dianna Holt
Les Conrad, David J. Graham, Derek Chafer
Tony Laing, Sheila Vivian
Soldiers.....Steve Smart, Geoff Brighty, Ron Conrad
Les Conrad, Tom Laird, Doug Roe
Roy Brent, David Aldridge, Clive Rogers
Alan Chuntz, Steve Kelly, Keith Simons
Derek Chafer, Ron Gregory, Rod Peers
Stewart Myers, David Pike, Jo Santos
Voices.....Bernard Martin, Joanna Ross, Carl Conway
UNIT Sergeant.....Derek Ware
Heavies.....Dinny Powell, Gordon Stothard
Barry Kennington, Alf Joint
Technicians....David Joyce, Pat Gorman, Max Diamond
Nick Hobbs, Roy Scammell
Assistant.....Sue Bourne
UNIT Soldier.....Max Faulkner
M.P.s.....Royston Farrell, Tom O'Leary
Cameramen.....Roy Reeves, Les Shannon

### TECHNICAL CREDITS

Production Assistant.....Nick John
Assistant Floor Manager.....Margot Heyhoe
Assistants.....Pauline Silcock
Kate Nemet
Technical Manager 1.....Ralph Watson
Geoff Shaw
Dave Sydenham
Technical Manager 2.....Bernard Fox
Sound Supervisors.....Gordon Mackie
Brian Hiles
Grams Operators.....Andy Stacey
Tony Philpot
Crew.....No. 10
Vision Mixer.....John Barclay
Floor Assistant.....John Turner
Film Editors.....Don Godden
Chris Wimble
Inlay Operators.....Mitch Mitchell
Alan Gomery
Visual Effects.....Peter Day
Ian Scoones
Costumes.....Christine Rawlins
Make-up.....Marion Richards
Action.....HAVOC
Incidental Music.....Dudley Simpson
Special Sound.....Brian Hodgson
Script Editor.....Terrance Dicks
Designer.....David Meyerscough-Jones
Producer.....Barry Letts

**DIRECTOR:**

**MICHAEL FERGUSON**

**BBCtv 1970**